

Message Text

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SUBJ: DANISH PARLIAMENT SUPPORTS DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

REF: COPENHAGEN 3408

SUMMARY: DURING ROUTINELY-SCHEDULED DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT
DECEMBER 11, A SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY APPROVED THE DANISH
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GOVERNMENT'S ACCEPTANCE OF DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. THE PARTIES LINED UP MORE OR LESS AS EXPECTED. SOMETIME AFTER PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL OF THE EC "CONVENTION" ON DIRECT ELECTIONS - PROBABLY EARLY NEXT YEAR - SPECIAL LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR SUCH ELECTIONS IN DENMARK WILL BE INTRODUCED. WE BELIEVE THAT BEFORE THIS LEGISLATION COMES TO A VOTE, THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT DENMARK'S PRESENT TWO RESERVATIONS ON DIRECT ELECTIONS WILL HAVE FALLEN - OR BE PUSHED - AWAY. END SUMMARY.

1) ON DECEMBER 11, DURING A ROUTINELY-SCHEDULED PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON "MARKET" QUESTIONS (ANYTHING CONCERNED WITH DENMARK'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE EC), DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN'S ACCEPTANCE AT THE ROME SUMMIT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. THE SOMEWHAT UNEXPECTED AND SUBSTANTIVELY UNNECESSARY VOTE CAME AS A RESULT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNING SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE LIBERALS TO HEAD OFF A RESOLUTION TABLED EARLIER BY THE THREE PARTIES OF THE FAR LEFT: SOCIALIST PEOPLES PARTY (SF), THE COMMUNIST PARTY (DKP), AND THE LEFT SOCIALIST PARTY (VS). THE RESOLUTION TABLED BY THE LEFTISTS CALLED FOR EITHER A REFERENDUM ON THE QUESTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS OR, AT LEAST, INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT OF FURTHER DISCUSSION ON THE QUESTION.

2) THE GOVERNMENT/LIBERAL RESOLUTION CALLED SIMPLY FOR THE FOLKETING (PARLIAMENT) TO ACCEPT THE GOVERNMENT'S ENDORSEMENT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SOMETIME IN 1978. THE RESOLUTION ALSO NOTED THAT SPECIAL LEGISLATION NECESSARY TO PROVIDE FOR SUCH ELECTIONS IN DENMARK WOULD BE INTRODUCED SOMETIME AFTER THE DRAFT "CONVENTION" ON DIRECT ELECTIONS IF IT IS RECEIVED HERE FROM THE EC MINISTERIAL COUNCIL. (COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND THAT AT THAT TIME FORMAL PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL OF THE CONVENTION MUST BE OBTAINED. INTRODUCTION OF THE IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION WOULD PRESUMABLY BE DELAYED FOR A NUMBER OF MONTHS.) THE TWO CONDITIONS THE GOVERNMENT HAS PLACED ON DIRECT ELECTIONS (THE DOUBLE MANDATE AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 COPENH 03702 161044Z

THE COINCIDENCE OF NATIONAL AND EC ELECTIONS) WERE NOT MENTIONED IN THE RESOLUTION.

3) THIS RESOLUTION PASSED WITH 118 IN FAVOR; 29 AGAINST; 18 ABSTENTIONS; 14 ABSENT (179 SEATS IN ALL). THE LIBERALS, CONSERVATIVES, CENTER DEMOCRATS, THE PROGRESSIVES (SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY), AND THE CHRISTIANS ALL VOTED SOLIDLY FOR THE RESOLUTION. TEN OF THE 53

SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ABSTAINED, AND THE NAY VOTES CAME FROM THE THREE PARTIES OF THE LEFT, AS WELL AS THE RADICALS.

4) RADICAL LEADER AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER HILMAR BOUNSGAARD EXPLAINED HIS OPPOSITION BY CHIDING THE GOVERNMENT FOR NOT HAVING RECEIVED A QUID PRO QUO FOR ITS ADHERING TO THE PRINCIPLE OF DIRECT ELECTIONS. HE SAID HE WAS NOT OPPOSED "IN PRINCIPLE" TO DIRECT ELECTIONS. HOWEVER, A PROMISE FROM THE OTHER EIGHT THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, SOME OF THE "ILLEGAL NATIONAL SUBSIDY ARRANGEMENTS" BE ENDED, SHOULD HAVE BEEN OBTAINED.

5) COMMENT: THE RESULTS OF THE DECEMBER 11 DEBATE WERE MORE OR LESS PREDICTABLE. ALTHOUGH THE PROGRESS PARTY LEADER, MOGENS GLISTRUP, IS HIMSELF PRESUMABLY STILL AGAINST DENMARK'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE EC, HE AND THE FEW OTHERS IN HIS PARTY WHO FEEL THE SAME, WENT ALONG WITH THE PARTY'S MAJORITY POSITION. THE RADICALS CONTINUE TO PURSUE A LINE THAT THEY HOPE WILL WIN THEM SUPPORT FROM THE ELEMENTS OF THE DANISH ELECTORATE WHO IDENTIFY WITH THE "INDEPENDENCE" OF RADICAL POLICY.

6) THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT BY THE TIME IT IS NECESSARY TO CHANGE DANISH ELECTORAL LAW TO PROVIDE FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EC PARLIAMENT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WILL THEMSELVES HAVE DROPPED THEIR INSISTENCE ON THE TWO CONDITIONS...OR FACE DEFEAT ON THE QUESTION BY A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. SUCH A MAJORITY WOULD HANG ON WHAT THE LIBERALS WOULD DECIDE TO DO AT THAT TIME. LUKENS

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